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TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND

Chief Sanitary Inspector

FOR THE YEAR 1955

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TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF, 1955

*Medical Officer of Health and Medical Superintendent of the
Taunton Isolation Hospital and Taunton
Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Taunton :*

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(appt. August, 1946).

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W. PLIMMER, C.R.S.I. (appt. July, 1950).

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To :

THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for 1955. The report contains the usual information on the health and sanitary circumstances of the district. This has again been divided into two sections, the first referring to the province of the Medical Officer of Health, and the second contributed by the Chief Sanitary Inspector. The report, in the main, follows the same lines as that of the previous year, but certain fresh facts have been incorporated in the various sections.

Attention may be drawn here to a few noteworthy points connected with the year under review:—

- (1) An account is given of the progress of the slum clearance programme, from which it will be seen that the parishes of the district are being systematically inspected, and the appropriate procedure set in motion with houses which are deemed unfit. A satisfactory feature of this inspection is that a fair number of houses which were considered liable to condemnation when originally inspected, have in the meantime been repaired and improved to the extent of removing them from the condemnable category. The Improvement Grant Scheme was much more widely applied than in previous years and it is felt that this has been of great value in bringing many houses of this district up to a high standard of hygiene and amenity.
- (2) The contact quarantine scheme for polio as described in last year's report was again operated. Only four cases were notified in the district, and none of these had any demonstrable connection with any of the others. This, so far as it goes, is evidence in favour of the scheme, but the numbers are too small to exclude the element of chance. It must be pointed out that few other authorities in the country have felt sufficiently convinced of the merits of this scheme to give it a trial. Nevertheless it is felt that the quarantine measures should be continued here meantime until a serious flaw in the argument on which they are based is demonstrated.
- (3) The incidence of diphtheria in England and Wales has become so low that the occurrence of one case of the disease in this district during the year is worthy of special mention. This involved a boy from a residential school. Fortunately the case

was not a severe one, and the boy made a good recovery. It was not found possible to determine the source of his infection, although the extent of investigation now felt to be necessary when diphtheria appears is indicated by the fact that 105 swabs from school and family contacts were examined on this occasion. The lesson to be learned is that diphtheria infection is still present in this country, and would undoubtedly give rise to clinical cases with all their associated dangers if immunisation were allowed to fall to a dangerously low level.

- (4) It will be noted from the Infectious Diseases Table that two cases of food poisoning were notified. This term is a misnomer, and the condition would be more correctly described as illness due to consumption of infected food. The food usually becomes infected in the process of handling and preparation, and our present clean food campaigns are directed towards lessening this risk to the public. Food Poisoning is probably responsible for a considerable amount of gastric and intestinal trouble in this and other districts, although few cases reach the stage of official notification because of the uncertainty that often exists as to whether an infection of this sort is in question. The two cases referred to were a man and wife travelling through the district by car. They were seized, almost simultaneously, with acute sickness and had to be fetched into hospital. Fortunately the illness subsided quickly, and they were able to proceed with their holiday on the following day. The infected food was thought to have been a meat pie which they had bought before setting out on their journey.
- (5) In the table giving causes of death in the district during 1955 it will be noticed that eleven deaths took place from cancer of the lung or bronchus. This is more than double the number occurring in any one of the previous five years, and exemplifies a trend which is causing a considerable amount of anxiety in the country as a whole. The point here is that this higher mortality may well be associated with the increased prevalence of the smoking habit during the past twenty or thirty years.

Once again I wish to thank the Members of the Council, the Clerk and Officials of other Departments, the Staff of the Public Health Department, and the Matron and Staff of the Isolation Hospital for their willing assistance and co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

HUGH MORRISON.

TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

Statistics of the Area for the Year 1955

Area (in acres)	70,675
Estimate of resident population, mid-year 1955 ...	21,870
Census population, 1951	20,516
No. of inhabited houses according to the Rate Books on 31st December, 1955	5,876
Ratable value 31st December, 1955	£117,157
Sum represented by a 1d. Rate, year 1955/56	£476

Physical Features and Social Conditions

Taunton Rural District lies in the south-western region of Somerset, surrounding Taunton Borough, the County Town. It is roughly triangular in shape, with Taunton Borough situated near the middle of the triangle. The boundary of the district is formed on the north by the Rural Districts of Williton and Bridgwater; on the east and south-east by the Rural Districts of Langport and Chard; on the south by the County of Devon; on the south-west and west by the Rural District of Wellington.

There is considerable variation in the type of country found in different parts of the district: in the north and north-west there is high ground forming portions of the Quantock and Brendon Hills; in the south the land rises to the hill parish of Churchstanton lying in the Blackdowns; between these regions lies the fertile valley of Taunton Deane, with the ground falling towards the east to the flat moors and marshy ground surrounding the lower reaches of Tone and Parret. Geologically also, the formations vary. In the north are found chiefly old and new red sandstone; in the south, lower lias and upper greensand; the valley regions have new red marl, new red sandstone and alluvium.

The climate is equable, with an average annual rainfall of 36.6 ins., and an average mean daily temperature of about 41° F. in January and 62° F. in July.

Rich arable and pasture land covers most of the district, but some of the hill regions are in the rough uncultivated state, and the soil on the Blackdown Hills tends to be poor in quality. In the eastern parishes the land is subject to seasonal flooding. Communications are good, and almost all parts of the district are easily accessible by road. Following the Tone valley through the middle of the district runs one of the main lines of the Western Region of British Railways and three branch lines leave it at or near Taunton to run to the north, south and west.

There are thirty-two parishes with estimated populations varying from 80 to 2,650. Habitations are widely scattered over these parishes, but there are several sizeable villages, the largest being Bishops Lydeard, Bishops Hull, Lydeard St. Lawrence, North Curry and Trull.

Most of the inhabitants are engaged in some form of agriculture, dairy farming being particularly important. General farming is also largely practised, and allied activities are withy growing and basket-making, fruit farming and cider-making. There is a paper mill in the district which employs a fair number of people, and another source of employment for men is stone-quarrying which is carried out on a considerable scale. Many of the residents in the rural district travel daily to Taunton to work in factories and other establishments.

There is one large institution in the district, namely Tone Vale Hospital in the parish of Norton Fitzwarren, which, with its patients and resident staff, accounts for a population of about 1,200.

VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR

With reference to the figures which follow, it should be pointed out that the standardisation of the rate for births and deaths allows for the differing age and sex distribution of the populations in different areas, and is obtained by multiplying the crude rate by a comparability factor for the district furnished by the Registrar General. This enables comparison to be made with the figures for the country as a whole, or with those for other districts.

1. Births.

(a) Live Births.

	M.	F.	Total	} Crude birth rate per 1,000 of the estimated resi- dent population 14.04
Legitimate	145	149	294	
Illegitimate	7	6	13	
Totals	152	155	307	

{ Standardised Birth Rate, Taunton R.D. ...	...	15.72
{ Birth Rate, England and Wales ...	...	15.0

(b) Still Births.

Total	...	...	...	...	4
{ Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births—					
{ Taunton R.D.	...	...	...	...	12.86
{ England and Wales	...	...	...	...	23.1
{ Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population—					
{ Taunton R.D.	...	...	...	...	0.18
{ England and Wales	...	...	...	...	0.35

2. Deaths.

(a) Total Deaths	...	...	...	...	...	331
Crude Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population						15.13
{ Standardised Death Rate, Taunton R.D.	...	...	...	...	13.62	
{ Death Rate for England and Wales	11.7	

(b) Maternal Mortality.

Total maternal deaths from all causes	0
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{ Death Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births—					
Taunton R.D. 0.0					
England and Wales 0.64					

(c) Infant Mortality.

Deaths of infants under 1 year of age—

Total 10				
Deaths among legitimate infants 9				
,, illegitimate ,, 1				

{ Death Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births—					
Taunton R.D. 32.15					
England and Wales 24.9					

(d) Deaths from Cancer (all ages)—

Total 47				
--	--	--	--	--

Infant Mortality during 1955

Cause of Death.				Under 1 week	1 to 2 weeks	1 to 6 months	6 to 12 months	Total under 1 year
Prematurity	...	...	...	3	—	—	—	3
Bronchopneumonia	...	...	...	—	—	—	1	1
Meningococcal Meningitis	...	...	...	—	—	1	—	1
Asphyxia Neonatorum	...	...	...	1	—	—	—	1
Acute Bronchitis	...	...	...	—	—	1	—	1
Collapse of Lung	...	...	...	1	—	—	—	1
Congenital Brain Defect	...	...	...	—	1	—	—	1
Unclassified	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	1
Total				5	1	2	1	10

Causes of Death during 1955

					M.	F.	Total.
Tuberculosis, respiratory	...	...	...	...	—	—	—
Tuberculosis, other	...	...	...	...	—	—	—
Syphilitic disease	...	...	...	...	—	—	—
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	—	—	—
Whooping cough	...	...	...	...	—	—	—
Meningococcal infections	...	...	...	...	1	—	1
Acute poliomyelitis	...	...	...	...	—	—	—
Measles	...	...	...	...	—	—	—
Other infective and parasitic diseases	...	...	...	...	1	1	2
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	...	...	...	...	3	2	5
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	...	...	...	...	9	2	11
Malignant neoplasm, breast	...	...	...	...	—	5	5
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	...	...	...	...	—	3	3
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	...	...	...	...	14	9	23
Leukæmia, aleukæmia	...	...	...	...	1	—	1
Diabetes	...	...	...	...	1	4	5
Vascular lesions of nervous system	...	...	...	...	22	18	40
Coronary disease, angina	...	...	...	...	29	15	44
Hypertension with heart disease	...	...	...	...	3	3	6
Other heart disease	...	...	...	...	20	23	43
Other circulatory disease	...	...	...	...	16	19	35
Influenza	...	...	...	...	—	2	2
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	5	7	12
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	4	4	8
Other disease of respiratory system	...	...	...	...	3	2	5
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	...	...	...	...	1	—	1
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhœa	...	...	...	...	2	—	2
Nephritis and nephrosis	...	...	...	...	1	—	1
Hyperplasia of prostate	...	...	...	...	1	—	1
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	...	...	...	...	—	—	—
Congenital malformations	...	...	...	...	1	—	1
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	...	...	...	...	25	31	56
Motor vehicle accidents	...	...	...	...	2	1	3
All other accidents	...	...	...	...	7	6	13
Suicide	...	...	...	...	—	2	2
Homicide and operations of war	...	...	...	...	—	—	—
All Causes—Total					172	159	331

GENERAL PROVISION of HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

Domiciliary Services

(1) Medical and Nursing

There are six general medical practitioners living and carrying on the main part of their practice in different areas of the district. In addition to this, most of the Taunton Borough practitioners have some rural district residents on their lists, and there is also, as would be expected, some overlap from the surrounding rural districts in the provision of medical attention. There are adequate arrangements for domiciliary consultation, when required, with consultants serving the Taunton area, and speaking generally, the practice of medicine in the district is of a high standard. The provisions for domiciliary nursing are also satisfactory.

(2) Home Help Service

This service, administered by the Somerset County Council, is now well established in the district, and invaluable assistance is given in many cases of illness and the domestic difficulties arising therefrom. There is no doubt that this is one of the most useful of all public services. I am indebted to the County Organiser for the following analysis of cases where help was arranged in Taunton Rural District during 1955.

Maternity	...	...	...	...	...	33
Old age	...	...	...	...	...	21
Chronic illness	...	...	...	...	...	14
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	2
Emergency illness	...	...	...	...	...	22
Total						92

Hospital Services

The Hospital Services of the district are administered by the Taunton Hospital Management Committee, under the general direction of the S.W. Regional Hospital Board. Some of the provisions for the needs of various types of patient are detailed below :—

(1) General Medical and Surgical

The Taunton and Somerset Hospital together with Musgrove Park Hospital which is also situated in the Borough of Taunton, and which is probably eventually destined to supersede the first-named establishment, cater for most medical and surgical conditions. Musgrove Park Hospital takes most of the adult cases, and also has a comprehensive Pædiatric Department. The Taunton and Somerset Hospital is in the meantime dealing with Orthopædics, Ophthalmology and Ear, Nose and Throat work. It also houses the Casualty Department for the area. Both hospitals have out-patient facilities in addition to in-patient beds. Certain cases requiring special investigation or treatment such as neurosurgery or radio-therapy are referred to Bristol Hospitals for this purpose.

(2) Infectious Diseases

Cases of infectious disease from Taunton Rural District are sent to the Taunton Isolation Hospital, situated in the Borough of Taunton. This hospital was administered up to 4th July, 1948, by a Joint Hospital Board, representing the various districts from which cases were admitted. Since that date, administration has passed to the Regional Hospital Board, with day to day management being carried out by the Taunton Hospital Management Committee. There are three large wards for the isolation and treatment of patients suffering from the commoner epidemic diseases, but these have become less useful since Diphtheria has become a rare condition, chiefly owing to the success of the national immunisation campaign, and since Scarlet Fever has apparently entered a mild phase in which most of the cases can be successfully isolated and nursed at home. The bulk of the Isolation Hospital work is done in a more recently constructed cubicle block. The hospital has been admitting in the past year or two many cases, especially among children, of various pyrexial and nutritional illnesses not coming into the strict category of notifiable diseases, which would formerly have been treated in General Hospitals. Home isolation is carried out wherever the home conditions are satisfactory. Most cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum are admitted to the Isolation Hospital and also cases of Puerperal Pyrexia.

(3) Tuberculosis

Cases of pulmonary and non-pulmonary Tuberculosis come under the Regional Hospital Board for treatment, which is supervised by the Chest Physicians for the area. The Sanatoria are at Quantock, Wincanton and Taunton for pulmonary cases. Cases requiring Orthopædic treatment are admitted to the Chard Sana-

torium and to Bath Orthopædic Hospital. Pre-tubercular children and children with tubercular glands are sent to Compton Bishop Children's Home, near Axbridge.

(4) **Poliomyelitis**

Suspected cases are sent for diagnosis to the Taunton Isolation Hospital. If the condition is confirmed they are seen by Regional Specialists who arrange for continuation treatment either as out-patients or as in-patients at Bath Orthopædic Hospital.

(5) **Chronic Sick**

Patients are received into hospitals, chiefly those in Taunton and Wellington, which have now passed from Public Assistance administration to that of the Regional Hospital Board. The status and reputation of these institutions is improving, more or less rapidly, as their association with the less desirable features of the old Poor Law fades from public memory. A geriatric service for the Taunton area is in process of development.

Powers now exist under the National Assistance Act, 1948, Section 47, for the compulsory removal to a suitable institution of persons who are not able to devote to themselves and are not receiving from other people, proper care and attention. There are adequate safeguards against misuse of these powers, but cases do crop up from time to time when they are very useful and in the true interest of the person concerned. The onus is thrown upon the Medical Officer of Health to investigate these cases and to advise on whether these powers ought to be invoked. No cases required to be dealt with in this way in the Taunton Rural District during 1955 although preliminary steps were taken on several occasions and these resulted in removal to an institution without compulsion having to be applied.

(6) **Mental Sick**

Cases are admitted to the Mental Hospital at Tone Vale, near Taunton. The psychiatric specialists conduct out-patients' clinics for the area, and it is felt that now, more than ever before, mental patients are having the benefit of treatment at an earlier and more hopeful stage of the disease.

Mentally defective cases are well provided for at Sandhill Park Hospital which is situated in Taunton Rural District.

Clinics and Treatment Centres

(1) Tuberculosis

Clinics for patients suffering from this disease, and for the supervision of suspects and contacts, are held by the Chest Physicians at Musgrove Park Hospital. There is an After-Care Committee working in co-operation with these clinics. Mass radiography has been carried out from time to time on various groups of the County population, by a team working from a centre in Bristol, but this service has not been called upon to deal with residents in Taunton Rural District.

(2) Venereal Disease

A combined Clinic and Treatment Centre is carried on at the Taunton and Somerset Hospital which caters for male and female patients of this and surrounding districts. This centre has now come under the administration of the Regional Hospital Board. Early cases of syphilis are usually sent to Frenchay Hospital, Bristol, for a fortnight's intensive penicillin treatment as in-patients. Afterwards they continue observation and treatment at the Taunton Clinic.

(3) Maternity and Child Welfare

The Maternity and Child Welfare Acts are administered by the County Council, under whose supervision are also the Health Visitors and Midwives practising within the area. There is an excellent Maternity Home in the Urban District of Wellington at which some of the mothers from Taunton Rural District are confined. Obstetric Consultants in Taunton are available for consultation with Medical Practitioners in the District. Abnormal and complicated cases can be admitted for hospital treatment when necessary. Every case of Puerperal Pyrexia and Maternal Mortality is investigated by the Medical Staff of the County Council.

Laboratory Facilities

The Public Health Laboratory Service has a Laboratory in Taunton which undertakes the bacteriological examination of swabs, blood, fæces and sputum, etc. This service is available also to the Doctors practising in the District. Bacteriological and chemical analyses are also undertaken for the examination of milk, foods,

water supplies and sewage effluents, etc. The co-operation and assistance of the Public Health Laboratory Staff in investigating all types of bacteriological and epidemiological problems is of the greatest value.

Ambulance Facilities

Ambulance transport for all cases has now become the responsibility of the Somerset County Council. A central ambulance department has been set up which arranges for vehicles to be provided as required. A twenty-four hour service is maintained throughout each day of the week.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Acute Infectious Diseases

The following table gives the number of notifications received for various notifiable diseases, their age groups, and the number admitted to Taunton Isolation Hospital:—

Diseases.	No. of Notifications.	AGE GROUPS.							No. admitted to Isolation Hospital.
		1st year of life.	1-2 incl.	3-4 incl.	5-9 incl.	10-14 incl.	15-24 incl.	25 & over	
Scarlet Fever ...	24	—	1	4	13	3	3	—	7
Diphtheria ...	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Measles ...	145	1	38	32	69	3	1	1	2
Whooping cough ...	54	6	9	9	27	1	2	—	—
Pneumonia ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1
Food poisoning ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Poliomyelitis ...	4	—	—	—	2	1	1	—	4
Erysipelas ...	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	1
Puerperal Pyrexia..	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Meningococcal Infection ...	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

The following table shows notification rates of the above diseases for Taunton Rural District compared with the same rates in the previous year. In each instance these rates are calculated as numbers of notified cases per 1,000 of population, except with Puerpera Pyrexia in which the rate is furnished by the number of cases per 1,000 total live and still births:—

Diseases.	No. of Notifications in Taunton Rural District.	Rates for Taunton R.D.	
		1955	1954
Scarlet Fever	24	1.14	0.90
Diphtheria	1	0.05	0.00
Measles	145	6.90	6.81
Whooping Cough	54	2.57	4.29
Pneumonia	2	0.10	0.10
Food Poisoning	2	0.10	0.10
Poliomyelitis	4	0.20	0.05
Erysipelas	5	0.24	0.05
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	6.43	0.00
Meningococcal Infection	1	0.05	0.00

The incidence of notifiable infectious diseases did not vary greatly from the pattern of recent years. The number of measles cases was almost identical with that of 1954; whooping cough was somewhat less prevalent; poliomyelitis did not occur in epidemic form; the single case of diphtheria is referred to in the introduction to this report, as are the cases of food poisoning.

Tuberculosis

The following table gives the number of new cases of respiratory and non-respiratory Tuberculosis notified during 1955 and mortality from the disease:—

New Cases and Mortality during 1955

Ages in Years	New Cases				Deaths			
	Resp'tory		Non-Resp.		Resp'tory		Non-Resp.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 — 1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 — 5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 — 10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10 — 15	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
15 — 20	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
20 — 25	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
25 — 35	1	2	—	3	—	—	—	—
35 — 45	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
45 — 55	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
55 — 65	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and up... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not known	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	15		6		—		—	

At the end of the year, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names and addresses of 122 cases of pulmonary Tuberculosis and 27 cases of non-pulmonary Tuberculosis.

Again there is a substantial drop in the number of new male cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. It is gratifying to note that no deaths were attributed to this disease in the district during the year.

Diphtheria Prophylaxis

Immunisation against Diphtheria continues to be carried out by the Medical Staff of the Somerest County Council and by the Medical Practitioners in the District. The County Council's Immunisation

Scheme, which was begun in Taunton Rural District during 1941, continues to make progress, and the following figures supplied by the County Council show the condition of the child population as regards immunisation at the end of 1955—

Pre-School Children : aged 0—4 years

Number Immunised.	Estimated percentage immunised of total children in this Age Group.
610	44.41

School Children : aged 5—14 years

Number Immunised.	Estimated percentage immunised of total children in this Age Group.
1,340	74.24

The percentage of children immunised under the age of five is slightly higher than at the end of the previous year, but is still only about three fifths of the desirable figure; indeed less than half of the children in this age group are protected. One must continue to emphasise that attention should be given to this matter by parents and others concerned at a time well before the child reaches the age of one year.

The full benefits of immunisation in this country are now beginning to come to light, and the following table shows the dramatic change which has taken place in the incidence and mortality of the disease.

Diphtheria Statistics—England and Wales

Year	Diphtheria Notifications	Diphtheria Deaths
1945	18,596	722
1955	161	11

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply

Of the 5,876 houses in the district, it is estimated that 4,377 are connected with a public piped water supply.

Public water undertakings owned by the Council are five in number, viz:—

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Eastern Parishes (formerly Orchard Portman) | } Treated by
chlorina-
tion |
| 2. Churchstanton | |
| 3. Cothelstone | |
| 4. West Bagborough | } Unchlor-
inated |
| 5. Westleigh, Lydeard St. Lawrence | |

All these supplies are subjected to regular chemical analysis and bacteriological testing, and a tabular statement of these water analyses will be found in the report of the Chief Sanitary Inspector. The only one to cause any anxiety is that of the West Bagborough water in which the bacteriological counts have been fluctuating in an unsatisfactory way. It may be necessary for the Council to consider chlorination here unless an improvement takes place. The supplies yield an adequate amount of water for the areas which they serve, but in the case of the Eastern Parish Supply the margin between adequacy and shortage is not very great. No serious shortage was experienced in the year under review.

In addition to the supplies owned by the Taunton Rural District Council there is an extensive portion of the district served by the Taunton Corporation Water Undertaking. The following parishes are supplied as a whole or in part from this source:—Bishops Hull, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Corfe, Creech St. Michael, Kingston, Norton Fitzwarren, Orchard Portman, Pitminster, Ruishton, Staplegrove, Thornfalcon, Trull and West Monkton. This water is regularly tested and kept under supervision by the Taunton Borough authorities, and has maintained a consistently excellent standard.

The remainder of the district is supplied chiefly from wells, most of them coming into the shallow category, and thus being very liable to pollution. Cleaning of contaminated wells followed by chlorination sometimes results in a pure supply for a period of time, but the trouble is always likely to recur, and the wells can never be relied upon to provide a constant wholesome supply. Often boiling of water before use has to be advised, and the problem will not be satisfactorily solved until piped water is taken to the properties concerned. Sometimes shortage occurs in the well supplies, particularly in West Hatch parish, but this was not generally a cause of concern during the year under review.

No plumbo-solvent action exists in any of the water supplies of the district.

It is understood that progress is being made with the Taunton Borough Council Scheme for constructing a reservoir at Clatworthy, and when this comes to fruition it is hoped that many of the problems of water supply in the rural district will be solved.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Of the 32 parishes in the District, only seven have sewage disposal works, and of these works, perhaps three may be regarded as meeting disposal requirements satisfactorily, namely those in the parishes of Bishops Lydeard, Bishops Hull and Norton Fitzwarren, while the remaining four at Combe Florey, Hatch Beauchamp, North Curry and Corfe are inadequate for their purpose.

The occupiers of properties in other parts of the District make use of either pail closets, of which there are estimated to be almost 2,000 still in use, or drainage systems connected with septic tanks. Both these methods of disposal can yield satisfactory results from the Public Health point of view in certain circumstances, but all too often these circumstances do not exist. The use of pail closets

demands access to adequate ground space and suitable soil in which the contents may be buried, and involves attention the distasteful nature of which is becoming almost intolerable in modern times. The result is that very often the requisite attention is not or cannot be given, and nuisances and danger to health are likely to arise. Disposal by septic tank and filter bed is less open to objection, and many properties in isolated situations will certainly have to continue to be served in this way. Again, efficiency of disposal depends on a number of factors such as the nature and contour of the ground, the continuous functioning of a fairly delicate mechanism, and the bestowal of a certain amount of attention in keeping the plant in order. From the number of nuisances arising from faulty septic tanks it is obvious that the efficiency of the process can very easily break down.

There can be no doubt that water carriage of sewage to a proper disposal works is the method of choice in dealing with this matter, and the Council are fully aware of the inadequacy of the present provisions, and have had schemes prepared for installing the necessary works when it becomes economically possible to do so. The construction by Taunton Borough Council of a large disposal works at Ham, in the parish of Creech St. Michael, is proceeding, and a large part of the rural district in the vicinity of the town will be drained into this when it is completed.

The Sewerage Sub-Committee of the Council made a number of visits, along with Council officials, to various areas where nuisances from faulty sewage disposal were particularly troublesome, and often it was possible to put measures in hand for the alleviation of nuisance.

Housing

Provision of houses in the District by the Council has gone on steadily throughout the year. 46 were completed in 1955, and since the end of the war 458 have been built. In addition to this, about 215 houses have been built by private enterprise during the same period. This building activity has had some effect on the waiting list of families requiring accommodation, but continued efforts in this direction will be required for some time to come. There were about 610 applicants for Council houses on the waiting list at the end of 1955.

Considerable progress was made with the work of slum clearance. The Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose inspected houses in various parishes of the district along with officers of the Council, the member or members for the parishes concerned being

also present during these inspections. The following table shows the number of houses inspected, and the number in which it was decided to take action under the Housing Act, Sec. 11 (Demolition or Undertaking that property will not be used for human habitation) or Sec. 25 (Clearance Area procedure). Of those inspected but not coming into either of these categories, the great majority required repair or reconstruction work of varying extent to be carried out in order to bring them up to modern standards, and an approach to the owners with this object in view was called for:—

Parish	No. of Houses Inspected	Sec. 11 Procedure	Sec. 25 Procedure
Bishops Lydeard	3	1	—
Cheddon Fitzpaine	2	—	—
Crecch St. Michael	13	5	2 (5 houses)
Kingston St. Mary	12	6	—
Ruishton	9	1	1 (5 houses)
Stoke St. Mary	4	2	—
Thornfalcon	6	2	—
West Bagborough	5	1	—
West Monkton	11	2	—

A number of Improvement Grants under the Housing Act, 1949, were made by the Council during recent years. Consideration by members of Council and officials of applications for grants of this type has to be extremely careful and detailed, since considerable disbursement of public money is involved, but in cases which fulfil the requirements, this is a most useful way of saving property which would otherwise fall below the housing standards now demanded. During the year under review grants were approved in respect of 40 houses, and 18 had been the subject of grants in previous years.

Many families in the district, some of them perhaps from choice, but more of them probably from necessity, make use of caravans as permanent dwellings. It cannot be felt that this is the most desirable way of life, more especially when children form part of the family. During 1955, 62 moveable dwelling licences were issued, most of them for individual caravans, but some for sites capable of accommodating several. It was estimated that 193 caravans were in use with a total population of about 372.

Of the ex-military camps which were unofficially occupied in 1946, all have fallen into disuse for housing purposes except Sandhill Park where there still were, at the end of 1955, about 105 occupied huts.

The Council's building programme was as follows:—

Parish.	Number completed during 1955			Number under construction at 31st Dec., 1955
Norton Fitzwarren	—	52
Stoke St. Gregory	2	4
West Hatch	—	4
Creech St. Micael	—	4
Bishops Hull	22	—
West Bagborough	12	—
Lydeard St. Lawrence	4	12
Kingston St. Mary	6	2
Hatch Beauchamp	—	12
				90

The following table shows the Parishes in which the Council have erected houses under the various Acts:—

Parish.	Address.			Number of Houses.
Bishops Hull	...	1/74 Smithy Cottages	...	74
do.	...	20/35 Mountway Cottages	...	16
		1/34 Nortfield Estate	...	34 124
Bishops Lydeard	...	1/8 Gore Cottages	...	8
do.	...	1/10 Pound Lane	...	10
do.	...	1/12 Mill Lane Cottages	...	12
do.	...	1/30 Halfyard Cottages	...	30
do.	...	1/52 Darby Way	...	52
				— 112
Cheddon Fitzpaine	...	1/8 School Cottages	...	8
		1/10 Cheddon Lawns	...	10
				— 18
Churchstanton	...	1/4 Stapley Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/4 Church Road Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/16 Gillards Mead	...	16
				— 24

Parish.	Address.	Number of Houses.
Combe Florey ...	1/4 Meadowside ...	4
Corfe ...	1/4 Brook Cottages ... 1/4 Adcombe View ...	4 4 — 8
Creech St. Michael ...	1/8 Ryes Terrace ...	8
do. ...	1/6 Charlton Lane Cottages ...	6
do. ...	1/4 Cheads Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/16 Rocketts Cottages ...	16
do. ...	1/10 Creechwood Terrace ...	10 — 44
Curland ...	1/4 Castle View ...	4
Hatch Beauchamp ...	1/4 Palmers Green Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/8 Crimthorne Cotts ...	8 — 12
Kingston St. Mary ...	1/6 Parks Cottages ...	6
do. ...	1 and 2 Chaces ...	2
do. ...	1/8 Greenway Terrace ...	8
do. ...	1/4 Fulford Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/10 Parsonage Cottages ...	10
	1/6 Quantock Way ...	6 — 36
Lydeard St. Lawrence..	1/8 Cross Croft ...	8
do ...	1/4 Nethercott Way ...	4
	17/20 do. do. ...	4 — 16
North Curry ...	1/6 Oxen Lane ...	6
do. ...	1/4 Backham Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/10 Croft Cottages ...	10
do. ...	1/8 Lillesdon Terrace ...	8
do. ...	1/8 Cricket Cottages ...	8
do. ...	1/24 Town Close ...	24 — 60
Norton Fitzwarren ...	1/4 Burnshill Terrace ...	4
do. ...	1/10 Station Road Cottages ...	10
do. ...	1/4 Manleys Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/4 Court Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/56 Hilly Park ...	56
do. ...	6/52 Rectory Road ...	24
do. ...	19/37 Rectory Road ...	10 — 112
Otterford ...	1/4 Brook Cottages ...	4

Parish		Address		Houses Number of
Pitminster	...	1/8 Littleham Cottages	...	8
do.	...	1/8 Colleylake Cottages	...	8
				— 16
Ruishton	...	1/5 Ruishton Lane Cottages	...	5
do.	...	1/3 Lipe Lane Cottages	...	3
do.	...	1/4 Slades Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/12 Steart Cottages	...	12
do.	...	1/28 Coronation Close	...	28
				— 52
Staplegrove	...	1/6 Hillhead Cottages	...	6
Stoke St. Gregory	...	1/16 Willey Road	...	16
do.	...	1/8 Stathe Cottages	...	8
do.	...	1/20 Woodhill Terrace	...	20
do.	...	1 and 2 Meare Green Cottages	...	2
do.	...	5 and 6 Polkes Field	...	2
				— 48
Stoke St. Mary	...	1/4 Homefield Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/8 Pattens Cottages	...	8
				— 12
Thornfalcon	...	1/8 Glebe Cottages	...	8
Trull	...	1 and 2 Horts Cottages	...	2
do.	...	7/14 Mill Lane	...	8
do.	...	1/4 The Green	...	4
				— 14
West Bagborough	...	1/10 Vale View Cottages	...	10
do.	...	1/4 Hill View Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/4 South View Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/4 Parkside	...	4
do.	...	3/14 Heathfield	...	12
				— 34
West Monkton	...	1/4 Titley Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/4 Brittons Ash Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/6 Hyde Lane Cottages	...	6
do.	...	1/14 School Road Cottages	...	14
do.	...	1/54 Elms Estate	...	54
do.	...	1/8 Bungalow Elms Estate	...	8
				— 90
TOTAL			...	858

Of the above total of 858 houses, 204 were built to replace houses dealt with by Slum Clearance in previous years, under the Housing Acts of 1930 and 1936.

Refuse Collection

There are no new facts to report on this service. It is hoped that a more frequent collection may be possible in some areas in future years, but the ruling factor here at the present time is expense. Some efforts towards the provision of more suitable containers were apparent, but the Chief Sanitary Inspector is still concerned about the widespread lack of proper dustbins throughout the district.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR

The following is a tabular statement of work carried out during the year 1955:—

Number and nature of inspections:—

Dwelling houses	...	...	...	...	...	191
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	4
Food premises	...	...	...	...	...	26
Government Slaughterhouse	...	...	...	...	...	2,065
Factories and Workshops	...	...	...	...	...	12
Water supplies	...	...	...	...	...	109
Drainage, foul ditches, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	120
Moveable dwellings	...	...	...	...	...	70
Infectious diseases	...	...	...	...	...	6
Refuse and salvage collection and disposal	...	...	...	...	...	310
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	40

Water Samples

66 samples of water have been obtained for bacteriological examination during the year. Of this number 45 have been taken from private supplies, and reported on as follows:—

Grade 1.	6 samples.
2.	5 „
3.	10 „
4.	24 „
	—
	45 „
	—

Advice on improving existing supplies and warnings against drinking water without boiling have been issued in all appropriate cases.

21 samples of water have been obtained from public supplies in the area. The results are as follows:—

Supply.	No. of Samples.	Satisfactory.	Unsatisfactory.
West Bagborough	6	2	4
Cothelstone (chlorinated) ...	4	4	0
Lydeard St. Lawrence	4	4	0
Portman Supply (chlorinated) ...	4	4	0
Churchstanton (chlorinated) ...	3	3	0

Investigations have been made in conjunction with the Surveyor to the Council in cases where reports fall short of the required standard—recent samples have shown a marked improvement.

Five chemical analyses have been taken and all were satisfactory.

Rodent Control

An operator is employed jointly with Wellington R.D.C. During the year the sewers, sewage disposal works and refuse dumps were inspected and treated systematically. Private dwelling houses and business premises have been surveyed and treated both from complaints made and infestations discovered during surveys. The inspections of farm premises have been carried out in areas suspected or where complaints had arisen, and co-operation with the Agricultural Executive Committee Pest Department has been working effectively. Summary of inspection and control measures taken are as follows:—

Report for 12 months ending 31st December, 1955

	Non-Agricultural				(5) Agricul- tural
	(1) Local Autho- rity	(2) Dwell- ing Houses	(3) All others (includ- ing Business Premises)	(4) Totals 1, 2 & 3	
I. Number of Properties in Local Authority's District	17	5,811	361	6,189	556
II. Number of Properties in- spected as a result of	—	86	3	89	2
(a) Notification ...	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Surveys ...	17	270	148	435	245
(c) Otherwise ...	8	75	41	124	43
III. Total Inspections carried out—including re-inspec- tions ...	87	595	184	866	261
IV. Number of Properties in- spected which were found to be infested by					
(a) Rats { Major	4	12	1	17	—
Minor	12	138	21	171	94
(b) Mice { Major	—	—	—	—	—
Minor	—	10	—	10	—
V. Number of Infested Prop- erties treated by the L.A.	16	160	6	182	—
VI. Total Treatments carried out including re-treatments	28	193	6	227	—
VII. Number of Notices served under Section 4 of the Act					
(a) Treatment ...	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Structural Work (i.e. Proofing)	—	—	—	—	—
VIII. Number of cases in which default action was taken following the issue of a Notice under Section 4 of the Act ...	—	—	—	—	—
IX. Legal Proceedings ...	—	—	—	—	—
X. Number of "Block Con- trol" schemes carried out	—	4	—	4	—

Bakehouses

There are 13 bakehouses in the district and 4 visits were made to them during the year. Several minor defects have been noted and dealt with by informal action.

Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949

The number of persons registered with the Council as distributors of milk in the area is 8.

Milk (Special Designation) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulation, 1949 to 1953

One dealer's licence is in force under the above Regulation.

Milk (Special Designation) (Raw Milk) Regulation, 1949 to 1954

Six dealer's licences are in force under the above Regulation, plus one dealer's supplementary licence.

Ice Cream

The number of retailers of this product in the area is 46 ; of this number one only is an actual manufacturer. The remainder of the retailers sell pre-packed ice cream, which is stored in properly constructed refrigerators.

Meat Inspection

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part

	Cattle excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.	Horses
Number killed (if known)	750	552	18,942	12,680	28,370	0
Number inspected ...	750	552	18,942	12,680	28,370	0
All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci						
Whole carcases condemned	1	4	7	24	94	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	12	28	8	545	1,022	0
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysti- cerci	1.73	5.8	0.08	4.49	3.94	0
Tuberculosis only.						
Whole carcases condemned	3	4	0	0	26	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	28	17	0	0	790	0
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	4.13	3.81	0	0	2.88	0
Cysticercosis						
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	0	2	0	0	0	0
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigera- tion	0	2	0	0	0	0
Generalised and totally condemned	0	0	0	0	0	0

Report for the year ending 31st December, 1955

Reasons for condemnation

Beasts	...	T.B.	...	...	7 carcasses (Gen.)
					22 heads
					6 livers
					16 prs. lungs
					2 sets mesenteries
		Abscesses	...	...	2 heads
					9 livers
					2 prs. lungs
		Bruising	...	...	1 forequarter
		Cirrhosis	...	...	12 livers
		Flukes	...	...	8 livers
		Actinomycosis	...	...	3 heads
		Septic Mastitis	...	...	52 lbs. hindquarter
		Cysticercus Bovis	...	...	2 heads and all organs
		Jaundice	...	...	1 carcass
		Emaciation and			
		Inflammation	...	...	1 carcass
		Split Aitch Bone			
		(Septic)	...	...	1 hindquarter
		Broken Leg and Acute			
		Pyæmia	...	...	1 carcass
		Emaciated and			
		Oedematous	...	...	1 carcass
		Plum Pudding	...	...	1 liver
		Peritonitis with			
		Emaciation	...	...	1 carcass
		Septic Mammitis	...	...	1 udder and flanks
Calves	...	Abscesses	...	...	1 head
					1 liver
					1 knuckle
		Inflammation	...	...	3 carcasses
					1 liver
		Flukes	...	...	2 livers
		Chronic Pleurisy	...	...	1 carcass
		Jaundice	...	...	1 carcass
		Joint Ill	...	...	1 carcass
		Actinomycosis	...	...	1 head
					1 pr. lungs
		Scour	...	...	1 carcass
Sheep	...	Inflammation	...	...	9 carcasses
					9 plucks

	Abscesses	...	...	1 carcase
				4 plucks
				1 liver
	Emaciation	...	...	2 carcasses
	Oedematous	...	...	1 carcase
	Gangrene	...	...	1 forequarter
	Flukes	...	...	519 livers
	Pleurisy	...	...	4 forequarters
	Cysts	...	...	5 livers
	Bruising	...	...	1 forequarter
				1 hindquarter
	Emaciation and			
	Oedematous	...	...	4 carcasses
	Distomatosis	...	...	6 carcasses
	Moribund	...	...	1 carcase
Pigs	...	T.B.	...	26 carcasses (Gen.)
				752 heads
				36 plucks
				1 head and pr. lungs
	Tubercular Abscess			1 head
	Abscesses	...	...	30 plucks
				6 livers
				5 forequarters
				6 hindquarters
				12 heads
				1 udder of sow
				1 leg
	Inflammation			95 plucks
				4 prs. lungs
				6 livers
	Pleurisy	...	...	6 forequarters
	Peritonitis	...	...	6 hindquarters
	Jaundice	...	...	2 carcasses
	Bruising	...	...	3 hindquarters
				1 hock
				1 head
	Cirrhosis	...	...	8 livers
	Milk Spot	...	...	724 livers
	Pyæmia	...	...	19 carcasses
	Septicæmia	...	...	8 carcasses
	Pleurisy and			
	Peritonitis	...	...	53 carcasses
	Inflammation and			
	Abscesses	...	...	8 carcasses

Cysts	...	...	3 livers
			1 head
Peritonitis and			
Abscesses	...		2 hindquarters
Pleuresy, Peritonitis			
and Abscesses	...		1 carcase
Cirrhosis and			
Inflammation	...		2 plucks
Traumatic Pericarditis			1 pluck
Pericarditis	...		1 heart
Pneumonia with			
Haemorrhages	...		90 prs. lungs and hearts
Peritonitis and Septic			
Wounds	...	...	2 hindquarters
Pleurisy and			
Abscesses	...		4 forequarters
Pleurisy and Pyaemia			1 carcase
Pleurisy and			
Septicaemia	...		1 carcase
Swine Erysipelas			
and Pneumonia			1 carcase
Other Foods ...	Blown	...	...
			57½ lbs. Corned Beef

Refuse Collection

This has continued on the lines of the reorganisation carried out in 1951.

The following details refer to times of collection and salvage recovered:—

Frequency of Collections in the Area

<i>Area of Collection.</i>					<i>Collection Day.</i>	<i>Frequency.</i>
1	North Curry (Village only), Stoke St. Gregory Village, Woodhill, Curload, Athelney	...	...	...	Tuesday	Fortnightly.
2	Remainder of Stoke St. Gregory Parish	...	...	...	Tuesday	Monthly.
3	Remainder of North Curry Parish	...	...	...	Tuesday	Monthly.
4	Blagdon Hill, Culmhead Camp, Blagdon, Sellick's Green, Fulwood, Staplehay, Eastbrook, Trull	...	...	...	Wednesday	Fortnightly.
5	Remainder of Pitminster Parish	...	...	...	Wednesday	Monthly.
6	Ash Priors, Combe Florey, Cothelstone, Halse, Lydeard St. Lawrence, Tolland, West Bagborough	...	...	...	Thursday	Monthly.
7	Sherford Camp	...	...	...	Saturday	Fortnightly.
8	Creech St. Michael Village, Ruishton, Stoke St. Mary (excluding Mountfields Avenue)	...	...	...	Tuesday	Fortnightly.
8a	Mountfields Avenue, Stoke St. Mary	...	...	...	Tuesday	Weekly
9	Adsborough, Creech Heathfield, Langaller, Ham	...	...	...	Tuesday	Monthly.
10	Cheddon Fitzpaine	...	...	...	Wednesday	Monthly.
11	West Monkton	...	...	...	Wednesday	Fortnightly.
12	Bickenhall, Churchstanton, Corfe, Curland, Orchard Portman, Otterford, Staple Fitzpaine	...	...	...	Thursday	Monthly.
13	Kingston, Norton Fitzwarren	...	...	...	Thursday	Fortnightly.
14	Staplegrove	...	...	...	Friday	Fortnightly.
15	Durston, Thornfalcon	...	...	...	Tuesday	Monthly.
16	Hatch Beauchamp, West Hatch	...	...	...	Wednesday	Monthly.
17	Bishops Lydeard	...	...	...	Friday	Weekly.
18	Bishops Hull	...	...	...	Monday	Weekly.

Salvage Collection and Sales

1955 proved to be a very difficult year for trading in salvage materials, prices and outlets being extremely uncertain. The following items were disposed of during the year, yielding a surplus of approximately £466 after paying all expenses and a bonus of 20% on sales to the collectors:—

Material.	T.	C.	Q.	lbs.	£	s.	d.
Newsprint	78	17	1	15	622	13	8
Cardboard	16	9	0	0	139	16	4
Rags	2	9	1	0	29	11	0
Wool		4	1	2	17	18	6
Sacking		11	0	0	4	8	0
Mixed iron	12	18	0	0	64	10	0
Steel	1	18	1	0	7	13	0
Bottles			308½	doz.	21	5	9
Cast iron	4	8	1	0	22	1	3
Light iron	3	0	1	0	8	12	2
Non-ferrous Metals	1	2	1	0	55	12	6
Battery Lead		4	3	1	12	17	6
Mixed String		2	0	0	1	2	0
Bed Rails			71		3	11	0
Cycle Frames			19		2	7	6
	122	4	2	18	1,014	0	2

Food Poisoning Outbreaks

There were no outbreaks of food poisoning during the year. Two cases were notified, and an account of the main features of these is given in the introduction to this report.

Factories Act, 1937

The inspection of factories and workshops in the district from a public health point of view is carried out by the staff of the Public Health Department. Routine visits are paid to the various premises and the following table gives particulars of this work. It is to be

noted that the term Factories as used in this connection now includes Workshops, which accounts for the large number on the Register in this Rural District.

Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors):—

Premises.	Number on Register.	Number of		
		Inspec- tions.	Written notices.	Occupiers prose- cuted.
(i) Factories in which Section 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	7	2	0	0
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies	64	10	0	0
(iii) Other Premises under the Act (excluding out-workers' premises)	0	0	0	0
Total ...	71	12	0	0

National Assistance Act, 1948.

Section 50—Burial of the Dead

Three notifications were received during the year that persons in the area had died and that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the bodies had been made. The burials were accordingly arranged by the Council.

